PATRIOTISM

AND THE

LOVE OF LIBERTY

DEFENDED.

IN TWO DIALOGUES.

BY

THE HONOURABLE JOHN SOMERS COCKS, M. P.

Nam cum multa ſint in philoſophia et gravia et utilia accuratè copioſèque a philoſophis diſputata, latiſſimè patere videntur ea quæ de officiis tradita ab illis præcepta ſunt: nulla enim vitæ pars, neque publicis, neque privatis, neque forenſibus, neque domeſticis in rebus, neque ſi tecum agas quid, neque ſi cum altero contrahas, vacare officio poteſt; in eoque colendo ſita eſt vitæ honeſtas omnis, et in negligendo turpitudo. M. T. Cic.

Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind: this is the firſt and great commandment. And the ſecond is like unto it—Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf. St. Matt.

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PREFACE.

THE principles of government are now more generally conſidered than they ever yet have been. Many are of opinion that this is the misfortune of the times; others, on the contrary, think that it is their happineſs, and their glory. Mankind is undoubtedly much inclined to extremes. If the world for ages paſt has been enamoured of ignorance, it is poſſible ſhe may now have ventured rather too incautiouſly into the intricate labyrinth of ſpeculation. A prudent exertion of reaſon however muſt be allowed natural to man. To paſs our whole lives under a government, without ever attempting to comprehend on what

foundation it exerciſes rights over us, or on what account we are bound to obey and to enforce its laws, in caſe we have leiſure and opportunity for ſuch enquiries, is ſurely a degree of indolence, on a ſubject of the higheſt importance, ill becoming the intellectual faculties with which it has pleaſed the Supreme Being to endue us. If ſome men, from a miſtaken conſideration of the ſubject, deduce principles and ſyſtems hurtful to ſociety in general; or to that particular modification of it under which we happen to live (provided we approve of ſuch modification, as tending to promote the public welfare); ſurely ſuch circumſtances ought to ſtimulate us the more to diſcover and lay down true and ſound principles of government. By ſo doing, we may afford rational ſatisfaction to our own minds, and reflect moreover on ourſelves deſerved honour, by endeavouring to promote the happineſs of mankind in general, and by defending whatever we already have of our own

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which is really good and deſirable: and this attempt I contend may and ought to be made, without praiſing or ſanctioning ſuch vicious parts of a conſtitution as are in fact dangerous to itſelf, and have been retained merely through prejudice, or unjuſtifiable motives of intereſt. Upon this view of things, I preſent the following ſhort Dialogues to the public, without any apology for ſo doing; being conſcious that I mean them well, and not being able to foreſee any bad conſequences which can poſſibly ariſe from them. I do not deny, that I flatter myſelf they may produce good. A few obſervations, before my reader commences the peruſal of them, I muſt beg him indulgently to attend to. They contain my general ſentiments reſpecting government; on which I endeavour to act, ſo far as I am any way concerned in public affairs. My judgment may be often wrong in applying them; but I truſt that the ſoundneſs of my principles

is proved in the following ſheets. There is one conſideration intimately connected with my ſubject, on which I have not touched, excepting remotely in one ſhort ſentence; I mean that of private or domeſtic ſlavery, which did not occur to my mind as an object of inveſtigation diſtinct from ſlavery in general; every condemnation of which applies at leaſt with equal force againſt that which is private or domeſtic. But as the merits of this queſtion have lately been brought forward in an extraordinary manner, and, however once put by, are in truth at this moment on trial before the tribunal of the public, and muſt demand, and obtain in fit time, a reconſideration by the legiſlature of this country; I think it incumbent on me here to declare my opinion with reſpect to them, clearly and ſpecifically. This then it is:— I cannot heſitate to ſay, that I think any ſyſtem of private or domeſtic ſlavery diametrically contrary to the dictates of natural

tural religion; and wholly irreconcileable with the pure benevolence of chriſtianity. With regard to Negro ſlavery, and the African trade for Negros, hitherto connived at, and not yet aboliſhed by parliament, I moſt entirely agree in opinion with thoſe Honourable Gentlemen who have ſo worthily, and with ſo much well-directed ability, ſtood forward in reprobating both the one and the other, and in propoſing the abolition of the latter: I think they are both deteſtable, and can only ſtand by a total dereliction of every principle of religion, morality, and juſtice: and I have no doubt, as ſoon as the public has received due information on the ſubject, but that the general voice will put an entire end to the trade, and by that means not only free this country from the pollution it neceſſarily brings along with it, but alſo produce a ſyſtem which will oblige the Weſt Indians in the firſt inſtance to meliorate the ſituation, and ultimately to allow the freedom,

of

of their ſlaves. I am aware that what I have now ſaid may be called mere declamation. It is certainly my opinion only, without the reaſons on which that opinion is founded; for which I refer the reader to my objections againſt ſlavery in general, which he is about to conſider; and to the arguments contained in the ſpeeches of Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Fox, and other gentlemen who ſpoke in parliament in favour of the propoſed abolition; of whoſe ſentiments I manifeſted my approbation, by the parliamentary vote I gave on that occaſion. I ſhall attempt to add only one argument here, to thoſe which I recollect to have been urged on the ſubject. However men differ about the rights of men, I ſcarcely think there is an individual in theſe times who will contend, that the good of the governed ought not to be the object of government. The bulk of the people in the Engliſh Weſt India Iſlands are ſlaves; their good is ſo little attended

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to, even now, at a time when it is loudly proclaimed by their owners that their ſituation is much improved in compariſon to what it has been, that they have ſcarcely any mode whatſoever pointed out to them by the letter of the law, of having juſtice dealt to them; much leſs have they any actual means of obtaining redreſs (for conſider who are their judges) in caſes of the higheſt conceivable degrees of injuſtice, cruelty, inſult, and oppreſſion. Indeed almoſt the only point of view in which they are noticed by the law, is as objects of degradation, inſult, puniſhment, and torture. The ſyſtem of oppreſſion therefore exerciſed over theſe unhappy human creatures (if I am right in what I have above laid down, reſpecting the opinion of mankind as to what ſhould be the object of government), for the ſake even of conſiſtency, ought to be univerſally reprobated, and not ſuffered to endure any longer.

Having ſaid thus much with reſpect to the foregoing points of conſideration, I ſhall conclude my Preface with an earneſt exhortation, by way of caution to the nobility, and gentry, and other perſons of weight and property in this kingdom, ſeriouſly to conſider the preſent ſtate of Europe, and their own country; and, equally upon principles of rectitude and prudence, to avoid, while they reſiſt ill-deſigned and dangerous attempts at innovation, the giving, on any occaſion, unreaſonable oppoſition to neceſſary or uſeful reforms. As ſuch I cannot help conſidering the propoſed Abolition of the Slave Trade; and I hope at leaſt that thoſe members of the legiſlature, who voted againſt that meaſure on vague ideas of preventing innovations, will ſeriouſly reconſider—whether a general conviction in the minds of the nation at large, and of the world, that the parliament of Great Britain is juſt and humane, is not the moſt likely, as well as the moſt

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ſatisfactory method to preſerve entire their own authority, and the eſtabliſhed conſtitution of the kingdom. As a moſt beneficial and deſirable ſyſtem, likewiſe, which poſſibly may appear to ſome as an innovation, I for one moſt conſcientiouſly conſider that pointed out to us by the National Aſſembly of France, not to go to war but on principles of ſelf-defence. As a general rule, I think this is admirable; and, applied to ourſelves, moſt wiſely calculated to promote our public and private happineſs, to retain our power as a nation, and to continue to a remote period our excellent conſtitution. Why it is ſo, I conceive the reaſons are obvious. It is ſufficient for me to allege, that the rule is moral and right. One only exception to it ſtrikes my mind as proper to be admitted, and that is, the caſe of an unoffending free kingdom or commonwealth oppreſſed by the ſuperior power of an unjuſt enemy. In the ſupport of ſuch free kingdom or commonwealth, it

would certainly be right for a great and liberal nation to overleap the bounds of ſelf-defence, on principles of juſtice and humanity. As for alliances, when made and ſanctioned by the legiſlature of a country, they ought to be inviolably adhered to: but for a powerful community, which intends to act uprightly, I believe it is advantageous to be engaged in as few as poſſible; becauſe it is probable ſhe will much oftener be called on by her allies to waſte her reſources in their defence, even when the juſtice of their cauſe may be doubtful, than ſhe will ever have occaſion or opportunity to derive benefit from their aſſiſtance: beſides that it may happen, though ſhe is true to her engagements, they may not always be equally ſo to theirs. I am not afraid of being conſidered as an enthuſiaſtic friend to democracy, or to innovation; my ſentiments on theſe ſubjects are, I truſt, too clearly ſtated in the following Dialogues to be ſo miſtaken. Therein I

avow

avow myſelf a ſincere friend not to Democracy, Ariſtocracy, or Monarchy, in particular; but to whatever mode of government I conceive to be for the good of mankind. Moſt conducive to that end I believe the Britiſh Conſtitution to be upon the whole; and therefore am I heartily attached to it, though not wedded to its blemiſhes. With reſpect to the pacific ſyſtem of France, I am moreover deſirous that my countrymen, by adopting it, may prove to the world—that, while they retain their own Conſtitution in preference to any other, on rational grounds, they are yet anxious to render it more perfect on its own practical principles, and ready and deſirous to graft on it any real improvement which they can diſcover in the inſtitutions of other nations. I ſhall now, without further preface, ſubmit what I have written to the judgment of an impartial public.

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CATO. ANTONIUS *.

C. FROM the nature of things it appears, Antonius, that the duty and intereſt of mankind are in reality the ſame; for the firſt re-

* Though the perſons of my dialogues are called by Roman names, their characters, as my reader will very ſoon perceive, are Engliſh or Britiſh.

This impropriety will, I truſt, be conſidered ſo trifling, as not to require any further notice of it by me than this early acknowledgment of it, and a declaration that I have adopted it in order to render my road more ſmooth and eaſy to myſelf, and I hope likewiſe more agreeable to my reader; by avoiding on the one ſide the too great familiarity of Engliſh names only, and on the other the prolixity or ſtiffneſs of titles or epithets.

quires us to do well; and to do well is the only means of rendering us finally and permanently happy: when therefore we purſue intereſt in contradiſtinction to, or even independent of duty, we muſt be neglecting the ſubſtance, and toiling in vain after a ſhadow. It is highly incumbent upon us therefore, as far as we can, to gain a knowledge of our whole duty; and, when known and underſtood, reſolutely to perform it to the utmoſt of our ability; neither allured by luſt of temporary pleaſure, nor terrified by fear of preſent pain.

Now every individual confeſſedly owes ſomething to every other individual. In all tranſactions between himſelf and another, he is bound to adhere to the plain rules of probity and honour. If he ſees his fellow creature in diſtreſs, he is generally bound to relieve him; and, if any ſufficient cauſe prevents him from doing ſo, at leaſt to pity him, and in ſome degree to feel the afflictions under which he is oppreſſed. If ſo much is due from one individual to another, much more muſt neceſſarily be ſo from man to large numbers of his fellow creatures united in communities; and ſtill more to all mankind, inaſmuch as many are ſupe-

ſuperior to one or a few. Yet the whole race of man, though immenſe, is finite; ſo, likewiſe, what we owe to that race muſt have ſome bounds: to God, the only infinite being, our creator, protector, and preſerver, our duty is without bounds; from the performance of which, ſo far as our abilities extend, we cannot by ſtrict juſtice be excuſed: but we find ourſelves, when moſt deſirous to perform this duty, continually failing in it. His juſtice can require no more of the creatures he has made than the faculties and powers he hath thought fit to endue them with will enable them to do; and his mercy (who is perfect goodneſs and perfect love) we cannot doubt will make very great allowances for our frailty, provided we are ſeriouſly ſorry for what we have done amiſs; ſenſible that we are frail to a very great degree; heartily deſirous of adhering to our duty in future; and firmly reſolved to make that the fundamental rule of our conduct.

In this to God is really comprehended all duty: for a perfect being can only will that which is right, and muſt neceſſarily will all that is right; conſequently, we are bound in all things to obey his will; and when we do

ſo, we certainly do our whole duty. From this reaſoning it neceſſarily follows, that our duty to God comprehends all duty; and therefore that to the whole race of man: if ſo, it is impoſſible there can be a duty to that race inconſiſtent with duty to God; conſequently, where that to God is clear, the other, if at any time it ſhould appear contradictory to or inconſiſtent with it, ought to be pronounced fallacious, and wholly unattended to. In like manner, as communities and individuals are comprehended in the whole race of man, the duty to the two former muſt be comprehended in that to the latter; from whence, on the principles juſt laid down, it follows, that if at any time a general duty to mankind is clear, any apparent duty to a community or individual that is inconſiſtent therewith, ought to be conſidered as no duty at all, but, on the contrary, as a temptation to neglect our duty. From this reaſoning it further neceſſarily appears, that where a community of men is united under a government bound to provide for their common welfare (which ſort of union conſtitutes a nation or country), any apparent duty to any individual or individuals thereof, which is in any reſpect inconſiſtent with the duty

duty, to ſuch community at large, muſt be deceitful, and no duty at all, but its contrary. To ſum up this argument—on all occaſions where a general and particular duty ſeem contradictory or inconſiſtent, the particular is deceitful, and ſhould be unattended to; the general is real, and ought to be complied with. But to proceed:

Every man owes more to ſome individuals than to others; becauſe to ſome he is more bound by ties of blood, or friendſhip, or gratitude, or eſteem, than to others: ſo to one community he may owe more than to another for ſimilar reaſons; but to his own country he muſt owe moſt, becauſe to her he is bound by ties of the ſtrongeſt nature: and upon this duty, corroborated and ſupported by natural affection, which excites our public love to our country, as it does our private regard to our parents, our children, and our other neareſt relatives, is founded, in my opinion, the celebrated virtue of patriotiſm; of the indiſpenſable neceſſity of which, as an ingredient to form a truly good and illuſtrious character, I am convinced by arguments ſuch as I have adduced. And upon the principles neceſſarily ariſing from them I aſſert, that no inducement of love, or pity, or gratitude, or re-

ſpect, or any other affection; nor any motive ariſing from any conſideration whatever of relationſhip to any individual, or number of individuals; much leſs any emotion of wild ambition, or ſelfiſh gratification—can juſtify forſaking the defence and ſupport of our country's real intereſts.

A. Cato, I admire the picture you have drawn. I conſider it as excellent and beautiful in itſelf; but I fear no original will ever be found in this world, the reſemblance of which it can be ſuppoſed to repreſent. Like Pygmalion, you muſt beſeech the Gods to transform this excellent piece of workmanſhip, which is indeed your own invention, into a reality; or elſe I fear, like him, you will be in danger of pining away with the love and admiration of an imaginary object, which it is impoſſible you ſhould ever enjoy, becauſe it does not exiſt in nature.

C. Imaginary do you call it? Has the ſubject on which I have been ſpeaking been in any reſpect calculated to incite in the mind a warmth of enthuſiaſm or fancy? Have I treated it in a manner likely to produce ſuch effects? Plain in itſelf, and requiring only cool

cool attention to be underſtood; but certainly requiring that, I fear I have been tedious and dull in my manner of purſuing it. I thought but little of pleaſing, while I was wholly bent upon proving. I am convinced patriotiſm is a virtue which it is incumbent on all to poſſeſs, who have time and opportunity to reflect on the nature of it. That I have not ſucceeded in convincing you, I cannot be ſurpriſed, when I conſider how badly and unſkilfully I have handled the moſt excellent materials. But that you ſhould impute to me a warmth of imagination on this occaſion, I muſt confeſs does ſurpriſe me. If any thing could make my conviction ſtronger than it is already, this would do it; for it gives me reaſon to ſuppoſe that the arguments in behalf of patriotiſm, even as they have proceeded out of my mouth, ought to have brought you over to the opinion they ſupport; for, otherwiſe, why have you recourſe to ſo very poor a ſubterfuge, in order to avoid aſſenting to their truth?

A. What you have now urged is not more than I expected. To a perſon indifferent to me, reſting on your arguments, and aiming at the practice of that theoretic ſcheme of per-

fection which they pretend to eſtabliſh, I ſhould think myſelf juſtified in making no reply; contenting myſelf with this ſilent obſervation—that it is a rare thing indeed to meet with a man who, having the misfortune to be deprived of a right underſtanding, is really conſcious of being ſo, and willing to acknowledge his infirmity. But to you more is due: though with little hopes of bringing you over to that which appears to my mind the only rational opinion of things, I ſhall endeavour therefore to convince you of the impracticability of (what I ſhall henceforward call) your theory. I do not actually aſſert there is no ſuch virtue as patriotiſm, though I profeſs myſelf a good deal at a loſs accurately to define what is ſignified by the word. But this I am confident of, that your ideas on the ſubject are altogether Utopian; to prove which, let us fairly and coolly examine what this ſame virtue of patriotiſm has been from the earlieſt times.

Amongſt the Lacedæmonians it ſeems principally to have conſiſted in a ſullen miſanthropic pride, and in an haughty conſciouſneſs of ſuperiority over their own helots, and the weaker nations that ſurrounded them;

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joined to which was a contempt of money, the advantages whereof the citizens of Sparta were by law prevented from enjoying.

In Athens patriotiſm wore a different dreſs. Here ſhe appeared with leſs open averſion to mankind than at Lacedæmon. But, though the manners of Athens were more polite towards foreigners, her yoke was not leſs ſevere, nor her conduct leſs unjuſt towards thoſe nations who fell within the ſcope of her power. Patriotiſm it was, no doubt, which authoriſed that miſtreſs of Greece to ſquander away upon idle ſhows to her own people, and in uſeleſs magnificence within her own walls, the contributions of the confederated ſtates, voluntarily entruſted to her for their common defence. Patriotiſm likewiſe it was, I ſuppoſe, which in this republic fomented and encouraged a continual and ruinous animoſity againſt all thoſe of her own citizens whoſe virtues were moſt conſpicuous.

In Perſia the force of this virtue irreſiſtibly impelled ſeven heroes to deliver their country from the yoke of an uſurper, that they might afterwards have it in their power to decide, by the neighing of a horſe, which of their own number ſhould ſtep into the

the vacant throne, and be legally inſtalled into the full poſſeſſion of that abſolute authority againſt which they had ſo patriotically and effectually exerted their own endeavours, when acquired by leſs honourable means.

In the ancient republican days of Rome, her ſyſtem of patriotiſm was, that it was right and proper for her to preſerve her own liberty, extend her own empire, and increaſe her own glory, by any means, however in themſelves unjuſt; and alſo juſtifiable and meritorious in her to enſlave and oppreſs all the reſt of the world. This great nation was for a long period more true to herſelf, in my opinion, than any other; yet how far the principles on which ſhe acted are reconcileable to thoſe which you lay down, I leave you to determine: and even Rome, in her beſt days, had her internal diſſenſions; and thoſe violent ones between the patricians and plebeians, in which both ſides claimed the merit of patriotiſm, reciprocally branding each other with the opprobrious epithet of enemy to their country; and alternately oppreſſing and being oppreſſed. So much for the boaſted patriotiſm of antiquity!

If we were to conſider the ſame virtue as it exiſts

exiſts in our own times, I fear we ſhould have little reaſon to mend our opinion of it. Draw we however a veil over the vices and follies of foreign nations, that we may at leaſt appear free from that narrow ſpirit ſometimes called patriotiſm, which conſiſts in enmity to other countries, not love to our own. Suffice it therefore on this part of the ſubject to obſerve, that, with regard to Britain and her dependencies, the intereſt or caprice of particular parts of the empire ſeems to have been reſpectively more attended to than the ſafety, welfare, and glory of the whole: elſe, why have Britain and America ſeparated? why are not Britain and Ireland at this moment actually one realm?

From ſuch conſiderations as I have laid before you, I derive my creed of patriotiſm. If I wiſhed to lay down a theoretic ſcheme of perfection, it might be yours. But I content myſelf with recalling to my mind what has been, and reflecting on what is; and from thence I infer, that patriotiſm in practice is not, nor ever yet has been, what you believe it to be, and conſequently never can be; and therefore that your theory is only ideal—to advert to an expreſſion of your own, a ſhadow

in which there is no ſubſtance. Conſequently, he that acts upon theſe fine-ſpun notions will only expoſe his own folly, and incapacitate himſelf from promoting his own intereſts, or thoſe of his family, his friends, or his country.

C. A melancholy picture indeed yours is, Antonius: it is taken from the dark ſide of things. But do not miſunderſtand me: I am far from aſſerting there is no truth in what you have been ſtating; all I combat is, the concluſion you draw from thence, and even that only in part.

You conclude, from what you have advanced, that patriotiſm in practice never yet has been what I believe it to be, and conſequently never can be; and therefore that my theory is only an ideal thing, a ſhadow in which there is no ſubſtance.

Give me leave, before we proceed further, to aſk you whether, in the courſe of our preſent converſation, you have heard me ſay what I believe patriotiſm to be in practice? I think I can take upon myſelf to anſwer for you, that you have not. All that I have been endeavouring to prove, in regard to patriotiſm, amounts

amounts to this—that there is a duty to our country upon which that virtue is founded; and generally what, and how great, that duty is.

Had I indeed aſſerted that the theory I was laying down was ſuch a one as I expected to carry fully into practice, or even to ſee others completely do ſo, you might juſtly have ſpoken as you have done concerning it; upon the ſame grounds that I ſhould take upon me to pronounce any man inſane, who would ſeriouſly ſay that he expected to find perfection the attribute of any being but the Almighty. But to ſay that my theory (ſince you are pleaſed to call it ſo) is only ideal, a ſhadow in which there is no ſubſtance, merely becauſe in practice it is impoſſible fully to eſtabliſh, or act up to it—I muſt ſay it is as abſurd as to aſſert that virtue is ideal, becauſe no man is completely virtuous.

You go on with concluding—Conſequently he that acts upon theſe fine-ſpun notions will only expoſe his own folly, and incapacitate himſelf from promoting his own intereſts, or thoſe of his family, his friends, or his country.

As to a man's expoſing his own folly, by acting on theſe principles, that can only be in the

the opinion of the world; for certainly the Supreme Being will not look upon him as acting fooliſhly, who is aiming to do well. He may not perhaps have thought proper to endue ſuch a perſon with ſtrong natural underſtanding, or comprehenſive powers of reaſoning, through the want of which he may often fall into error; but it is impoſſible that God, who is perfect, can look upon him as acting fooliſhly who ſtrives to perform his duty: and folly in the opinion of the world, which is wiſdom in the ſight of God, and conſequently true wiſdom, is not to be feared and avoided, but deſired and coveted.

A man who acts thus, certainly promotes his own real intereſt by doing, according to the beſt of his judgment, what he ought to do; which is really doing ſo: and as to his friends and family, he will perform more eſſential ſervice to them by ſetting them a good example, thereby encouraging them to do their duty, or, in other words, purſue their real intereſts, than by procuring for them, by indirect means, the greateſt worldly advantages. Laſtly, for his country: to promote her welfare is a leading principle of all his actions. Why then muſt

he

he neceſſarily be ſo unfortunate as wholly to fail in this great aim? You ſay he neceſſarily muſt fail in it; but all the reaſons you have produced as the foundation of this neceſſity, amount to no more than this—that nations in general, like individuals, in every age of the world, have been very corrupt and bad; and that even the beſt nations, in their moſt incorrupt, or rather leaſt corrupt times, have never been wholly compoſed of patriots, or wholly actuated by the ſpirit of patriotiſm; that is, that no nation, however ſome of her citizens may at times have laboured for her good, has ever attained perfection. Does it follow, therefore, becauſe theſe good citizens have not made her perfect, that they have done her no good at all? You muſt acknowledge it does not. The fact muſt be the very reverſe; and that it is ſo I will undertake to demonſtrate, from the hiſtory of thoſe very nations which you yourſelf have brought forward, in order to prove your own falſe poſitions.

A. On your principles ſurely it muſt ſometimes be right to take the part of the enemy againſt your country (which would indeed be a paradox in patriotiſm); ſince there is no nation in the world which, in carrying on her

wars

wars and conteſts with other nations, is not ſometimes guilty of injuſtice: and then muſt not the ſuperior duty to mankind intervene, and lay you under a neceſſity of taking a part adverſe to her? I ſhall like to hear you ſolve this difficulty; for obſerve, if you cannot, your whole ſyſtem falls to the ground; ſince upon the ſame principles that it is juſtifiable to prefer the intereſts of your country to thoſe of mankind, it may likewiſe be defenſible to forego theſe ſame intereſts of your country for the ſake of individuals.

C. A real patriot will certainly do all in his power, according to the beſt of his judgment, to prevail on his country on all occaſions to act rightly; and conſequently with juſtice towards other ſtates, and with a due regard to their rights. But when, notwithſtanding his endeavours, ſhe will do wrong, is he to leave her? is he to go over to her enemies? Let him firſt examine his own breaſt. Does he at all times act rightly? what is it that he does, or what is it that he ought to do, when he has done amiſs? Be heartily ſorry for his fault, and endeavour to amend his conduct. So let him act towards his country. Let him feel her miſdoings; let him exert his moſt

moſt ſtrenuous efforts to amend her faults: but let him not lift up his hand againſt her, until he ſhall think it right to commit ſuicide on himſelf becauſe he has done that which he ought not to have done.

A. You ſaid juſt now (if I miſtake not) you could confute my arguments againſt your theory from the hiſtory of thoſe very nations which I have brought forward in ſupport of them.

C. Nothing more eaſy. I will ſummon thoſe nations on my behalf, according to the ſame order in which you have arranged them on yours. Sparta had her Lycurgus. She has long ſince loſt him, and likewiſe the benefit of his inſtitutions. Lycurgus, though an excellent legiſlator, was not perfect: nor were his inſtitutions, though good, without great faults; than which none was more conſpicuous than the cruel ſlavery to which they unjuſtly condemned the Helots. But theſe inſtitutions being good upon the whole, in reſpect to the Spartan nation, as long as they prevailed, the Lacedemonians were a great, a warlike, and a virtuous people: they have not now a name; and

their deſcendants are ſlaves, as void of ſpirit as of liberty.

Athens too had her patriots. Is her preſent ſituation equal to that which ſhe held amongſt nations, when ſhe baniſhed her citizens for being too virtuous; not becauſe ſhe did not prize their virtue, but becauſe ſhe feared they might be tempted, by the great power which reſulted to them from it, to do ſomething prejudicial to the public liberty? In conſequence of infringing the rights of others, ſhe in the end was deprived of her own. But were thoſe demagogues who inveigled her into ſuch a conduct, patriots? or rather ought not that Athenian more juſtly to be diſtinguiſhed by that honourable appellation, who refuſed to blot the reputation of his country, by concurring with the propoſition of his leſs ſcrupulous fellow-citizen, inſidiouſly to deſtroy the Lacedæmonian navy? And in the days of Ariſtides what republic was more flouriſhing than Athens?

Was Darius greateſt, when, one of ſeven, he was employed in freeing his country from the yoke of an uſurper; or when, ſurrounded by his ſlaves and eunuchs, he ſat deſpotic on the throne of Perſia?

Was Brutus or Tarquin to be preferred? or was Rome more great, more virtuous, and more happy, under the paternal guidance of her ſenate, at a time when the power of that aſſembly could not encroach on the rights of the people at large? under the imperial ſway of Heliogabalus? or under her preſent eſtabliſhment, the bleſſed juriſdiction of the Church?

With regard to the kingdoms and republics of modern Europe, why do their vices need a veil; enjoying as they do, even where it is moſt corrupted, a better religion than their anceſtors or predeceſſors? Man, you will ſay, is naturally vicious. That he is ſtrongly inclined by his nature to be ſo, every man's own feelings muſt, I believe, convince him, to his ſorrow; but thoſe ſame feelings muſt prove to him that his nature has alſo a ſtrong tendency to virtue, which in his mind reſiſts and ſtruggles againſt the oppoſite tendency to vice. Where there is moſt real patriotiſm, in that nation there is neceſſarily moſt virtue; conſequently, if modern Europe was more actuated by the principles of patriotiſm, her vices would not require ſo thick a veil. While I am yet ſpeaking of modern Europe, and before I proceed to any obſervation on the

ſtate of our own country, according to your arrangement, I cannot refrain from ſo far breaking through it, as to add to your catalogue of ancient nations one remarkable foreign inſtance of recent date—Holland. Private views have lately brought her to the brink of ruin, whom public ſpirit enabled two centuries ago to reſiſt with ſucceſs the moſt powerful monarch of the times; and deſervedly enriched with his ſpoils, to become, in defiance of his utmoſt efforts, an independent and powerful commonwealth.

As to our own country, only conſider and reſolve with yourſelf the following queſtions: Were Britain and her America more great, more powerful, more reſpected, more feared, more happy, or more virtuous, when they fought together in the fields of glory, and with united force upheld the honour of the Britiſh name common to both of them? or have they become ſo ſince, mutually liſtening to the counſels of weak and ill-deſigning men, they have by diſuniting, ſeparated and ſhaken to her very baſe an empire, the only great one in the modern world, which has ſtood and flouriſhed on the generous principles of freedom?

A. I con-

A. I confeſs your arguments have cauſed the ſoundneſs of my opinions to appear ſo doubtful to me, that I feel myſelf at a loſs what further to ſay in ſupport of them. If I am right, I am certainly much leſs prepared than you to talk upon theſe ſubjects, having conſidered them much leſs than you have. You muſt allow me therefore to wave a reply. You muſt allow me further, without anſwering your queſtions, to trouble you with ſome new ones of my own; and I, on my part, promiſe, if the anſwers you give me to them prove ſatisfactory, to become an immediate convert to your delightful theory.

C. The hopes of ſuch a happy converſion on your part will undoubtedly induce me, when the accompliſhment of that converſion is the object, to ſubmit to many diſadvantages on mine: I will not therefore inſiſt on anſwers to my queſtions. But ſo far am I from being prepared, as you ſeem to think I am, for a diſſertation of this kind, that, through fear of hurting the better cauſe, from a conſciouſneſs of my own inability to defend it as it deſerves, I muſt beg a little time for conſideration. If to-morrow your mind holds to re-

new the ſubject, and you continue determined to force upon me the hard conditions you have propoſed, I will not then avoid the combat, though on unequal terms. As a good deal may poſſibly be ſaid, it may be more agreeable to walk as we converſe: therefore I will meet you, if you pleaſe, at the ſame hour we met to-day, in your favourite meadow, by the water ſide.

A. I approve entirely of your plan, and will not fail you.—Adieu.

CATO.

CATO. ANTONIUS.

C. YOU are punctual, I perceive, Antonius; and, I doubt not, have been conſidering the ſubject of our late converſation: I alſo have been endeavouring to prepare myſelf to anſwer any queſtions you may wiſh to aſk in relation to it.

A. I am really obliged to you, and mean to avail myſelf of your endeavours before I leave you. Many of the opinions delivered by you the other day, have made deep impreſſions on my mind; and I begin to fear that mine, which were adverſe to them, tend to deſtroy all principle: a tendency which appears to me dreadful indeed; for, principle once deſtroyed, there remains no check that I know of againſt vicious inclinations, which in ſuch caſe muſt neceſſarily domineer over man, and render him miſerable himſelf, and the cauſe of miſery to his fellow creatures. Now your theory is founded on natural religion, and, if your deductions and reaſonings are right, neceſſarily ariſing out of it; becauſe you include all duties in that to God, and reſt them

on that foundation. I am ſtrongly therefore inclined (as you muſt perceive) to believe and acknowledge yours a true theory, and ſuch a one as ſhould be acted upon to the utmoſt of our abilities. Yet I have ſome difficulties ſtill remaining, with which I mean to trouble you.

C. Dear Antonius, call it not troubling me. It affords me the higheſt ſatisfaction to obſerve in you, how an ingenuous mind, once rouſed to thought, afterwards by its own internal energy derived immediately from the Creator only, rather than by any outward aſſiſtance, frees itſelf from the ſhackles impoſed by ignorance and miſtaken ſelf-intereſt. With ſuch feelings towards you, due to your own worth ſtill more than to my perſonal affection for you, I think myſelf peculiarly called upon to exert what little knowledge or abilities I am maſter of, to ſtrengthen thoſe good principles you are inclined to adopt, and remove from your thoughts any remaining doubts with reſpect to them.

A. The world is certainly not much inclined to impute the public actions of men to theſe good principles, whatever motives it may

may allow that they act upon in private life. I know many myſelf who are honeſt and generous in their private conduct, but at the ſame time both avow and act upon thoſe ideas in public matters, which, when we firſt began to converſe on theſe ſubjects, you heard me undertake to defend: the world indeed will ſcarcely allow that any ſtateſmen or politicians act upon any other. In order to think differently, therefore, I muſt much leſſen my opinion of many I am uſed to eſteem, and likewiſe hold a belief contrary to that of moſt men. Strong reaſons are requiſite to fix my mind in ſuch a belief: and your reaſons are very ſtrong; yet they have not removed all my doubts. It ſeems to me that, in many reſpects, my own obſervation ſtill confirms the deciſion of the world on theſe ſubjects. For inſtance, what is more common in politics than for men to unite with thoſe whoſe conduct they have moſt reprobated? to condemn, when in oppoſition to a government, the very meaſures they afterwards purſue when in power? to ſupport any meaſures propoſed by their party, whether they think them right or wrong, advantageous or hurtful to their country or mankind? I could allege much more matter

of

of this ſort, and enlarge greatly on my doubts and difficulties: but leſt you ſhould ſuſpect I come hither rather to juſtify a relapſe into my former opinions, than to profit by your inſtruction, I will haſtily conclude, by aſking your ſentiments concerning parties in a ſtate.

C. In a free ſtate I think they are inevitable. Virtue in this world cannot be expected entirely to pervade any whole; not more a whole community or commonwealth than the whole race of man. As no one man is perfect, no number of men poſſibly can be ſo. Between virtue and vice, therefore, there muſt always be a conteſt, where virtue is not entirely ſuppreſſed: and that ſhe cannot be in a free ſtate; for, without a degree of what is good, ſufficient to keep up an almoſt conſtant oppoſition to what is bad, freedom cannot ſubſiſt. Therefore, I ſay, the exiſtence of parties in a free ſtate is inevitable.

A. Do you mean to ſay there muſt be one party entirely good, another entirely bad, in every free ſtate?

C. By no means. The reaſoning I have already urged, would not conſiſt with ſuch a propo-

propoſition; as no whole, and therefore no community or commonwealth, ſo no party, can be entirely good. Beſides, where parties prevail, more than two continually exiſt together; in which caſe there muſt neceſſarily be ſome other line of difference between them reſpectively, beſides merely good and evil intention.

A. But when you infer that parties are inevitable in free ſtates, becauſe in ſuch ſtates there muſt be virtue; do you mean to inſinuate that in arbitrary governments there can neither be virtue nor parties? and that the reaſon why there can be no parties in them is, becauſe there can be no virtue?

C. I will conſider your two queſtions as in ſome degree ſeparate, and in ſome degree connected together, which I believe is the truth.

I am ſure I do not mean to ſay, or to inſinuate, that there can be no factions or diviſions in arbitrary governments; for I think that a very abſurd and ill-grounded opinion indeed, though perhaps not a very uncommon one: nor can I, in juſtice to mankind, or conſiſtently with experience, aſſert that there can be no virtue in a country apparently at leaſt ſubject to an arbitrary

bitrary government. But I ſincerely believe liberty, ſome degree of liberty, to be as eſſential to the body politic, for all good purpoſes, as a ſoul is to the human body. Without a ſoul the latter cannot attempt the practice of virtue, nor the attainment of happineſs; has neither power of thought or motion; but is a mere dead maſs, inſenſible, and moveable only at the will of another. What better can be ſaid of a nation which is completely enſlaved to the arbitrary will of a deſpot? Such a nation cannot attempt the practice of virtue, or attainment of happineſs; for it muſt have no other aim than the performance of its maſter's will. Such a nation has not the power of thought or action; for it is bound to think that beſt, and to do that implicitly, which its maſter may think proper to command. What is it then better than a mere dead maſs, inſenſible, and moveable only at the will of that man, woman, child, or combination of perſons, under whoſe dominion it may happen to be?

A friend to his country therefore muſt be a friend to her liberty: for ſuch a man wiſhes to advance the good of his country: neceſſarily therefore muſt he wiſh her (metaphorically ſpeaking) to live; by which I mean, to exiſt

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as a country: and without her ſoul, liberty, how can ſhe be truly ſaid ſo to exiſt. She may be drawn this way or that way; raiſed to an higher ſituation, or ſunk to a lower, by her prince, or other maſters; as a lifeleſs body may be by any one who has ſtrength enough to move it. But ſhe will ever continue equally paſſive, equally dead, equally immoveable by any powers of her own; unleſs the Author of all things ſhould be pleaſed to inſpire into her a ſoul, to beſtow upon her life, to give her liberty, by being endued with which ſhe becomes a free agent. If to the grant of this invaluable bleſſing, heaven-inſpired liberty, the ſame Almighty Being ſhould have been pleaſed to add power and underſtanding ſufficient to preſerve the bleſſing, he will have afforded all which a nation ought to deſire of him. For what is power? what is wealth? what is greatneſs? Without liberty, they muſt be altogether ideal. A ſlave who is the property of another, can really have none of them: all that he hath, together with himſelf, belongs to his maſter. If you are poſſeſſed of liberty, O my Country, with power and underſtanding ſufficient to preſerve it, what would you aſk more? A man ſtrong in mind and body, is able, under God,

God, to carve for himſelf, and work out his own good and happineſs: ſo do you likewiſe; you have from God the ſame ability.

But I have ſaid, I do not aſſert that there can be no virtue in a country apparently ſubject to an arbitrary government. Generally, in the conſtitution of ſuch country, there are diſcoverable ſome latent ſparks of liberty, every one of which is, to the nation inhabiting that country, a latent particle of life—of ſuch life and ſuch exiſtence (not to loſe ſight of the bold metaphor I have ventured to make uſe of) as are indiviſible from the nature of the human ſoul, including a capacity to underſtand, and freedom to will: and in as much as any nation has ſuch life or ſuch exiſtence, ſhe may think and act for herſelf; ſhe may attempt the practice of virtue, and attainment of happineſs: therefore in ſuch a country, however apparently ſubject to an arbitrary government, there may be ſome virtue. But the eſſence of this ſpecies of government (if government indeed it can be called, and not rather irrational and brutiſh power, preventive of all government) is ſimply this: that all things ſhould ſubmit to the will of the prince.—*Quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem.*

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I do truſt this theory is as impoſſible to be completely carried into practice as another theory of a different tendency and kind. But, if it could, what would be the conſequence?

A number of men, that is, a whole nation, would reſign themſelves abſolutely to the will of another; it matters not whether to the will of one or more than one: in doing ſo, they muſt diſcharge themſelves entirely from the obligation of performing any one moral or religious duty; becauſe his, her, or their will, to whom they have ſo ſubmitted their own, may be diametrically contrary to every duty either towards God or man.

This is to pluck up virtue by the roots, to give it up altogether: could the theory therefore of arbitrary government be completely brought into practice in any ſtate, and eſtabliſhed therein, that ſtate muſt be devoid of virtue. From hence it follows, that in as much as ſuch a power is eſtabliſhed in a ſtate, ſuch ſtate is devoid of virtue. The truth is, there does not exiſt, nor ever has exiſted in the world, any nation, in the conſtitution of whoſe government there has not been ſome mixture of this power; I mean arbitrary power: the reaſon of which is obvious.

No nation is, or ever has been, perfect. Now it is not more true that arbitrary power deſtroys virtue, than that the abſence and want of virtue produce arbitrary power. As Rome, while ſhe continued virtuous, never ſubmitted to the yoke of an emperor; ſo, in her beſt days, had ſhe been perfect, ſhe never would have had occaſion for dictators, decemvirs, or tribunes; all of whom, in their reſpective offices, were poſſeſſed of power inconſiſtent with entire liberty: and yet theſe, or ſome ſuch offices, were neceſſary even then; becauſe Rome, the moſt free, the moſt virtuous nation in the world, was never entirely virtuous, and therefore could not ever be entirely free.

Upon theſe principles I muſt allow this—that an attempt to eſtabliſh a greater degree of liberty in a nation than that nation has virtue enough to bear, cannot poſſibly do her any good: but, on the contrary, will moſt probably prove her ruin, by promoting licentiouſneſs and anarchy; which, in their own nature bad, almoſt always end in deſpotiſm, or the tyranny of one or a few. When therefore I ſtrongly inculcate the duty incumbent on every citizen to promote liberty in his country; to

encourage

encourage it with all his might, and increaſe it, where that can be done: I muſt be underſtood to mean, as far as the moral ſtate of his country can bear it, and no further. Bad men can only be prevented from committing the moſt violent diſorders in ſociety, like wild beaſts, by force: to curb and keep in ſubjection ſuch, therefore, ſome degree of arbitrary power is neceſſary in every ſtate. Thus in Britain, as in Rome, if we were entirely virtuous, and conſequently had no occaſion for the leaſt degree of arbitrary power, in order to carry on our government, we ſhould not want a king; we ſhould not want a houſe of peers; we ſhould not want even a repreſentative body of the commons; but might conduct our own affairs of ourſelves, free, equal, and independent of each other. Yet what friend to liberty and his country wiſhes to change our preſent happy conſtitution for ſuch a democracy, in which anarchy and confuſion could only pave the way for eſtabliſhed tyranny and oppreſſion?

Speaking generally, the excellence of a good government I take to be, in the firſt place, that it has no more of arbitrary power veſted in it than is really neceſſary, in order to

protect the peaceable and honeſt citizen againſt private fraud or violence, and the public itſelf againſt the ill deſigns of domeſtic or foreign enemies: and, ſecondly, that the neceſſary degree of this obnoxious and dangerous power be apportioned in the moſt judicious manner, and confided to the ſafeſt hands.

But not to loſe ſight of my ſubject—Leſt you may think I have ſpoken too figuratively and metaphorically in calling liberty the ſoul, the life, and exiſtence of a community, I muſt here obſerve, that the eſſence of arbitrary power being ſuch as I have deſcribed it, a friend to his country muſt be a friend to and ſupporter of her liberty, becauſe liberty is neceſſary to render his country virtuous.

There are, or I hope I may with more propriety ſay there have been, in England, a ſet of men, ſticklers for arbitrary power, who, conſcious of the extreme vicious tendency of that principle upon which men hold themſelves bound to obey every command of another, do not venture to enjoin active compliance with every wicked ordinance of the prince, but content themſelves with ſtrictly inculcating the duty of paſſive obedience only.

To

To theſe it is enough to ſay, that he who does not, to the utmoſt of his power, reſiſt and counteract what is bad, encourages it. If a wicked thing is done, and you could have prevented it, will you think yourſelf guiltleſs in the eye of Providence, becauſe you did not perform the wicked act with your own hand?

From what has been ſaid, being conſidered, it appears, that as in all free ſtates there muſt be parties, ſo in every ſuch ſtate there muſt be at leaſt (for there may be more) one good party; or, in other words, one party compoſed chiefly of ſuch men as ſeek to promote the good of their country. I know it cannot be entirely ſo compoſed, becauſe it is impoſſible to prevent thoſe who, under the appearance of public virtue, ſtrive only to promote their own miſtaken private intereſt, from intruding themſelves into the company of the real friends to their country. Nor is it reaſonable to expect that even the honeſt men ſuch a good party muſt principally conſiſt of, will be wholly free from faults, or wholly without their private views. When ſuch a party, however, is predominant in a nation, and that nation is at the ſame

time poſſeſſed of rights ſufficient to guard herſelf againſt the oppreſſion of any man or ſet of men; that is, when the affairs of ſuch a nation are conſtitutionally entruſted to the hands of men in general of known character, integrity, and ability; *quamdiu ſe bene geſſerint*, and the people approve of them, and cheerfully ſubmit to their guidance and direction, then is that nation in the moſt free, moſt virtuous, moſt happy condition that it is capable of attaining: treaſon, and even faction, againſt ſuch a government, deſerves the ſevereſt puniſhment. Treaſon in ſuch a caſe is indeed treaſon againſt the ſtate, almoſt the higheſt crime in the offenders that men can be guilty of; becauſe it is levelled directly againſt the happineſs of their own country; againſt the good of mankind; againſt the cauſe of God, of liberty, and of virtue. No crime whatever can exceed theirs, excepting in the ſingle inſtance, where men ſo raiſed to the government of their country betray the truſt repoſed in them, and ſacrifice that country to their own private ambition or caprice. Our anceſtors, therefore, may be thought to have acted juſtly and wiſely, when they pronounced ſo terrible a ſentence againſt traitors, as that which

which our ſtatute book contains: at the ſame time it is evident upon what grounds they made the law which authoriſes and enforces that ſentence—grounds very different from thoſe by which a tyrant is protected in ſecurity, whilſt he tramples upon the necks of his ſubjects, invades their liberties, and deſtroys their rights. Such was the conduct of our James II.: but, thanks to Heaven! if it be but to have preſerved freedom in the world a century longer, all the good men of the nation united then prevailed; and, aſſiſted by our illuſtrious deliverer King William III. expelled the tyrant with infamy. Happy indeed is the country in which a good party is predominant. Under ſuch auſpices the ſmall confederated ſtates of Greece were more than equal to the overgrown empire of the Perſian deſpot. Rome likewiſe being bleſſed with a ſucceſſion of great and good men to guide her commonwealth, while at home ſhe ſecured and improved her domeſtic liberty, abroad engaged and overcame almoſt all the known nations of the world. Nor that ſhe made herſelf their miſtreſs do I praiſe her; but I praiſe her for that virtue which enabled a petty ſtate of Italy to ſubdue the world.

Now the good men of a nation are moſt likely to be united, and together to prevail againſt the bad, immediately after ſome great and ſudden revolution in a country in favour of liberty. The reaſon is obvious; for, in order to have brought about ſuch a revolution, they muſt by previous ill uſage have been provoked, and ſtirred up to vigorous meaſures: and by ſuch a revolution their antagoniſts muſt, for a time, have been driven out of the country, or terrified into ſubmiſſion; while the people at large muſt approve and ſupport a change ſo manifeſtly to their advantage. Such was the event in Rome after the expulſion of Tarquin—ſuch was the event in Britain after the abdication of James II. Yet in neither of thoſe inſtances was the right cauſe entirely ſupported by thoſe who were ſuppoſed to be its friends. The ſons of Brutus, that great Roman, who had taken, above all others, the moſt active part in the deliverance of his country, would have betrayed that country into the hands of the depoſed and baniſhed tyrant. Some in Britain were no leſs abſurd or wicked: but let their names be conſigned to oblivion, as thoſe of the fallen ſpirits in the Paradiſe Loſt of Milton; and may all hereafter

after who follow their pernicious example experience the fate of Titus and Tiberius.

From ſuch a ſuppoſed period of a revolution we will ſet out, endeavouring to draw a ſketch of the nature of parties in general, and to point out the principal motives by which they are likely to be actuated, the manner in which we may expect them ſeverally to conduct themſelves, and the probable conſequence of their proceedings: having done this, we will conclude this part of our ſubject by attempting to mark out that courſe which, through the ſeveral changes in a ſtate, a real and liberal friend to his country ought to purſue. No ſooner is the tyrant expelled, or the bad government, of whatever nature it be, overturned, than the thoughts of all good men muſt be immediately employed upon two great objects: the firſt will be, to prevent the renewal of the bad government; the ſecond, to ſubſtitute in its room one which promiſes as fairly to be permanently good as the nature and then ſtate of things will permit. For this purpoſe, as ſoon after the revolution is accompliſhed as poſſible, the principal men meet together to treat of national affairs in as open and popular a manner as their own

ſecurity, and that of their country, will allow. So far many actually do, and all ſeem to unite in one common cauſe—the good of the nation: but no ſooner are they met, than many differences of opinion ariſe amongſt them. If indeed there appears great immediate danger of return on the part of the depoſed government, the love of the really well-meaning towards their country, the fears of the falſe friends and bad men who may have taken the ſame ſide from private views, join for a time in ſtifling their mutual differences, and put it in the power of ſome great man to take the lead, and unite them againſt the common enemy: but no ſooner is that enemy quelled, than their diviſions re-commence. The beſt, the wiſeſt, and moſt liberal, ſeek to eſtabliſh liberty and ſecurity, by whatever particular mode of government or policy (without having recourſe to unjuſtifiable means) they think thoſe deſirable ends moſt likely to be obtained. Another deſcription of perſons, equal perhaps to the firſt in good intention, but inferior in underſtanding and liberality of ſentiment, place all happineſs in ſome particular form of government: this ſtands up for a democracy; this for an ariſtocracy; another

cannot

cannot bear to part with the name of King, to which he has been uſed; and a fourth, though he has riſked life, and every thing that is dear to him, in order to expel the tyrant, and is ready to reiterate the ſame riſk to prevent his return, which he is convinced muſt be the ruin of his country, yet thinks it againſt his conſcience to acquieſce, by any public act, in depriving that reprobated exiled individual of the mere appellation of royalty. Some go to a more dangerous length; and, though they have heartily afforded their aſſiſtance in throwing off the yoke, as ſoon as they have effected their purpoſe, think they are bound by their duty to attempt the reſtoration of it. In obedience to theſe, and ſimilar tenets, no tie of oaths, no bond human or divine, is held ſacred.

While ſuch differences prevail among the good, as unhappy in their effects as the cauſes of them are for the moſt part unreaſonable and abſurd, the bad, no doubt, are eager to make their advantages of them. Of thoſe who had joined in the expulſion of the old government, ſome had done ſo through motives of pique and revenge againſt their former maſters; others, thinking to raiſe their ſituation

tion by a change; while a third ſet, through fear of being joined in the ruin of their aſſociates, had left the weaker ſide, and come over in time to the ſtronger: nor (as we have already obſerved) can we expect to find the good and well-meaning themſelves entirely free from the operation of paſſions and private views. Now, in ſuch a ſtate of things, the bad take advantage of the ſcruples and frailties of the good, to promote whatever ill deſigns they may have conceived, which will vary according to circumſtances, and as deceitful fancy leads them to ſuppoſe this or that thing their intereſt, or allures them with the tempting proſpect of this or that gratification. That the confuſion neceſſarily ariſing out of theſe ſeveral cauſes muſt be great, is not to be doubted. It encourages the exiled tyrant to make another and another attempt, in ſome one of which it not unfrequently happens that he or his family at laſt ſucceed; or elſe that a new tyrant ſtarts up, more cruel and more oppreſſive than the firſt. It is not material preciſely in what manner; but, under the circumſtances above ſuppoſed, liberty muſt certainly be in imminent danger, and, it is very probable, be ultimately overpowered.

Thus

Thus it happened in Rome, after the ſecond Brutus had freed his country from her ſecond tyrant; thus likewiſe in Athens, upon the re-admiſſion of Piſiſtratus to the ſovereign power; and in England, upon the exaltation of Cromwell to the protectorate. If after ſuch re-admiſſion or exaltation the bad government continues, and the country long ſubmits to it, pronounce that country ruined, that is, condemned to abject ſlavery and miſery; as Rome was from the period in which the power of Octavius Cæſar was confirmed: he only paved the way for Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero. If the country in ſuch a caſe has much virtue remaining in her, ſhe will not long endure her ſituation, but ſoon re-aſſert her rights; as did Athens upon her final expulſion of the Piſiſtratidæ; and England, when, after having ſubmitted for a time to the tyranny of James the Second, ſhe at length ſo juſtly declared him to have abdicated the throne. Suppoſing then the cauſe of liberty, notwithſtanding all difficulties, able to counteract and keep down the cauſe of tyranny, the conteſt between virtue and vice, you muſt obſerve, is the grand conteſt. There may be many parties, inaſmuch as there may be

be many opinions; for every opinion of conſequence, which is adopted by any conſiderable number of men, immediately conſtitutes a party: but ſtill I muſt again aſſert it—the grand conteſt is between virtue and vice. Shall a good government be eſtabliſhed, or a bad one? Shall a government be eſtabliſhed whoſe aim is likely to be the good of the public; or ſhall a government be eſtabliſhed whoſe aim is likely to be the gratification of the vanity, ambition, or caprice of one or a few, at the expence of that public? The different modes by which, and the different degrees of earneſtneſs with which, different men purſue theſe two contrary objects, is the cauſe of the multitude of parties, where they exiſt: which ſame is likewiſe the reaſon that in the good parties there will almoſt always be ſome evil deſigning men, and in the bad too frequently ſome men with right intentions: I ſay too frequently, becauſe I fear ſuch perſons more often give a ſanction to the wicked ſchemes of their aſſociates, than correct the bad tendency of them; bad men being in their generation wiſer than the children of light. In conſequence of theſe conſiderations, excluſive of others already urged, it is impoſſible to think,

think, that in free ſtates, in which parties muſt exiſt, although the great conteſt be manifeſtly between virtue and vice, there will be one party entirely virtuous, another entirely vicious, ſince there will almoſt always be more than two parties in ſuch ſtates; and not one of the whole number, probably, ſo virtuous as to have no bad men in it, or ſo vicious as to have no good men. What is the part then, in ſuch a ſituation of things, which the real and liberal friend to his country will take?

He will undoubtedly, if he can, join himſelf to the firſt ſet of honeſt men whom I have deſcribed in my account of parties; or, if he is not ſo fortunate as to meet with any ſuch, he will venture alone on the principles I have ſuppoſed them to act upon; in doing which he will certainly be able to act heartily and conſcientiouſly with many others, whoſe principles, though good, are of a leſs liberal kind. He will endeavour in his own mind to determine, in the then ſituation of things, what ſpecies of government is at the ſame time moſt likely to promote the liberty, the virtue, and the happineſs of his country, and to be permanent and ſtrong. This he will ſtrive to eſtabliſh againſt all others whatſoever; and

ſupport,

ſupport, when eſtabliſhed, to the utmoſt of his ability.

From all that has been ſaid theſe concluſions are to be drawn :—That in all free ſtates there will be parties, often more than two—that in all free ſtates there will be a conſtant conteſt between virtue and vice ; or, in other words, between liberty and ſlavery—that parties will be actuated, however, often by other motives alſo, owing to the frailties, errors, and different judgments of men. But a different judgment on the ſame ſubjects muſt ariſe from a want of true wiſdom in men. Thus it is evident that (as we have already fully proved the firſt and great conteſt in every free ſtate to be between virtue and vice) there can be no other ſource of conteſt whatſoever but the oppoſition of folly to wiſdom ; of frailty, weakneſs, and abſurdity, to ſound ſenſe and reaſoning : and conſequently that the whole conteſt is founded on theſe four cardinal cauſes—virtue and vice, wiſdom and folly ; whereof, unfortunately for mankind, the third is to a certain degree often joined to the ſecond ; and the fourth, in an equal degree, not unfrequently found united with the firſt. We further conclude, from what has

been advanced, that in all free ſtates ſome party or parties will at ſome periods be evidently better and wiſer than others, and therefore at ſuch times more to be truſted: likewiſe that there will almoſt always be ſome one or more parties inclined to carry on an oppoſition to the power of government, and capable of doing it whether the government is conducted well or ill.

It is a manifeſt conſequence, from the foregoing arguments, that in all ſituations, as well as the extraordinary one of a revolution, the true friend to his country ſhould act upon the ſame principles, never ceaſing firmly to ſupport, according to the beſt of his judgment and the utmoſt of his abilities, good government and liberty againſt bad government and ſlavery. That in ſo doing he ought always to feel a ſtrong bias in favour of the eſtabliſhed government, is evident; becauſe, unleſs it is exceedingly oppreſſive and bad, conſidering all the dangers that attend a change, he will not be likely to promote the good of his country by attempting it. And if it is really mild, juſt, and beneficial to the public, he is bound by every tie of duty and affection to his country, to ſhed the laſt drop of his

blood

blood in the defence of it. So much for the nature of parties in a free country, and the duty of a citizen in ſuch a country with regard to them.

Let us now conſider how an arbitrary government can be affected by the ſpirit of party.

If there are any ſparks of virtue or liberty in a ſtate ſubject to ſuch apparently arbitrary government, there muſt exiſt in it, at leaſt, one party that is inſpired therewith in ſome degree, which will be ſtronger or weaker according to the degree of virtue and liberty which that ſtate is poſſeſſed of; and therefore ſuch a party cannot be called a party exiſting in an arbitrary government, becauſe it only exiſts in the ſtate inaſmuch as there prevails therein ſome ſmall proportion of freedom. It may not be improper here to obſerve this proportion of freedom may be of two ſorts; the one (which I will call legal) ſuch as is eſtabliſhed by a law unalterable by that power, which in all or moſt other reſpects is deſpotic over the country; the other (which I will call cuſtomary) ſuch as ſubſiſts only in the manners of the people, and, in defiance of the arbitrary authority under which

which in moſt inſtances they groan, derives validity from the force of uſage and ancient cuſtom. Now, inaſmuch as a country has in its conſtitution legal or cuſtomary freedom, however apparently ſo, it is not entirely ſubject to an arbitrary government; therefore, in ſuch countries there may ſubſiſt parties partaking of the nature of thoſe that ſubſiſt in free ſtates. But ſuppoſing ſuch a thing as a government entirely arbitrary, to which that of Rome under her emperors in former times, and in our own days that of the Turkiſh empire, approach as nearly as I believe any human eſtabliſhment can do, are we to conceive no parties, no factions, no diviſions, will exiſt in it; but that all will be order, peace, and tranquillity, and that in theſe reſpects ſuch a government has the advantage over a free one? Could we think this, we ought undoubtedly to acknowledge that an arbitrary government is the moſt deſirable conſtitution to live under; for what can be preferable to peace and tranquillity, with order? But the truth of the caſe is widely different from ſuch a view of things. In ſuch governments, parties, factions, diviſions of the worſt ſort, muſt ariſe. Amongſt men who yield that obe-

dience which they owe to the dictates of reaſon and their conſcience, to the capricious will of a creature or creatures not leſs frail than themſelves, the eſtabliſhed conſtitution of things manifeſtly encourages what is bad, and diſcourages what is good: from whence I infer, it muſt produce the moſt pernicious conſequences to the country in which it prevails; of which diſcord will not fail to be one, for the following reaſons:—It is not to be conceived that a community of ſlaves will always agree to ſubmit to the ſame maſter: experience proves the contrary. Bloody diſſenſions muſt and do continually ariſe amongſt them on this account; for, however it may be made a common cauſe to prevent the return of freedom, every man will ſupport the pretenſions of that perſon to the ſupreme power, under whom he expects to be moſt able to oppreſs his fellow citizens, paying the ſmall price of being tyrannized over in his turn. And as it is very eaſy to find a claimant to power which can only be attained and preſerved by force, whenever a large body of men appear ready to ſupport ſuch claimant; it neceſſarily muſt happen, that if at any time a conſiderable number of perſons,

ſons, in a country ſubject to an arbitrary government, unite under experienced leaders, to depoſe one prince, and enthrone another, civil diſcord muſt enſue; which will be of the moſt cruel and unrelenting kind, becauſe the principle which actuates both parties, in ſuch a caſe, can be no other than a ferocious ſtrife for ſuperiority, natural to man, as an animal, in common with the moſt ſanguinary of the brute creation. Such a ſyſtem, while it leaves no check to the paſſions but fear, propoſes no ſatisfaction to the mind but the gratification of thoſe very paſſions, and conſequently muſt give perpetual action to the ſenſations of hatred, malice, and revenge; which being continually oppoſed by the like feelings, muſt in a manner perpetuate diſſenſion. Thus you ſee how little reaſon there is to expect, in a country ſubject to an arbitrary government, peace and tranquillity, with order. There will indeed be this difference, amongſt others, between the parties of a free government and the factions of an arbitrary one—for factions I muſt call them, by way of diſtinction: the former will ſubſiſt long together, contend, and ſtruggle, and mutually diſtreſs, and by turns almoſt overpower, one another, but not

entirely; the latter will ſoon deſtroy, or be deſtroyed: in which caſe the conquerors remain lords; but they continue no leſs deſtroyers, through fear (amongſt other reaſons for their conduct) of ſuffering themſelves in their turn, which at laſt they do: while in their room another ſet of men, if poſſible worſe than the former, force their way through blood into the vacant government: and ſo on, till God in his wrath utterly ſubverts the nation; as he did at laſt the Romans, and has done all others, when they entirely loſt their liberty and their virtue. So that we may conclude there do exiſt parties, or rather factions and diviſions, in all arbitrary governments, and that they are of a ſpecies much more dreadful than thoſe which exiſt in free governments; but that they will not be ſo conſtantly viſible and apparent: from which laſt circumſtance ariſes that abſurd and miſtaken idea, that deſpotiſm is the mother of order.

A. Allow me a few words more. What is your opinion of ambition, and the love of glory and fame? I know you muſt deteſt theſe inducements, when they lead men to raiſe their private fortunes, or even reputation,

tion, by the detriment or ruin of their country, or by injuring the rights of mankind. But I mean to aſk your opinion of that ambition, and love of glory and fame, which ſeem to have had conſiderable ſhare in the production of almoſt every great and noble action that ever has been performed; and which enable the mind to exalt herſelf above fear, indolence, or pleaſure, in the purſuit of honour.

C. I think they are good aſſiſtants to virtue, and guards againſt vice, and therefore within due bounds to be encouraged. I think they ought to be encouraged when they ſtrengthen the mind to perform her duty; and to be entirely thrown aſide as vicious, when they inſtigate her to act a contrary part. I would conſider them as a ſword, ſhield, and coat of mail, with which it may be juſtifiable and praiſeworthy to arm myſelf in a good cauſe; but which ought on no account to be made uſe of againſt my country, or in any unjuſt enterpriſe.

A. Yet another queſtion, and I have done. What are your general ſentiments reſpecting attempts to reform eſtabliſhed conſtitutions of govern-

government, which upon the whole are good, and deſerving of continuance?

C. All the things of this world, by their nature, tend towards decay and death; and ſooner or later muſt ſubmit to the one, and be ſwallowed up in the other, being unavoidably involved in evil from their neceſſary imperfection: conſequently they require continual refreſhment and renovation, in order to be preſerved. There is no reaſon why political conſtitutions ſhould be exempted from this general rule: on the contrary, reflection muſt convince us that they are full as liable to decay, and its ultimate conſequence, death or diſſolution, as any other exiſting object of our contemplation in this our mortal ſtate. It neceſſarily follows, then, that unleſs the rotten and vitiated parts of a political conſtitution have from time to time ſome powerful antidote applied to them, they will infect, and gradually corrupt, and finally deſtroy, the whole. For theſe obvious reaſons, a friend to his country muſt be a friend to every real reform of her conſtitution. At the ſame time he ought to remember, that a very violent remedy is frequently worſe than the diſeaſe it is intended

tended to cure: and moreover that patients of an irritable and nervous habit (a habit not unfrequent in our unſettled climate) often fancy themſelves dangerouſly ill of ſome diſorder, by which they are in truth little or not at all affected; and are fond in ſuch a ſituation of conſulting empirics, who are always ready to adviſe ſome powerful ſpecific, which (if they are to be believed) is capable of reſtoring not only health to thoſe who are ill, but even youth to the aged, and ſometimes life itſelf to the dead. By relying on ſuch as theſe, individuals often deſtroy their conſtitutions, at a time when, by due inveſtigation of, and attention to, the cauſe of their malady, they might either effect a radical cure of it, or at leaſt ſo far alleviate it in its root, as to prevent any bad conſequences from it for many years. In like manner ſtate mountebanks, calling themſelves reformers, frequently do, and if they had the power ſtill more frequently would, with one or two of their violent remedies, bring to a ſudden and untimely end the beſt contrived political conſtitutions; which with due attention to and correction of any excreſcences, or growing corruptions, which may have ſhewn themſelves in their habit, might endure and

flouriſh for ages. How to ſteer a middle and ſafe courſe between the two extremes—a general determined oppoſition to prudent and neceſſary reform on the one ſide, and a furious zeal for innovation on the other; which, like Scylla and Charybdis, threaten the fearful pilot with deſtruction on whichſoever ſide he ſuffers his bark to deviate—is in my opinion a very conſiderable difficulty: at the ſame time it is ſuch a difficulty as every man, who is at all converſant in public affairs, if he wiſhes to promote the real good of his country, muſt attempt, and ought to exert all his abilities to ſurmount: ſince giving entirely way to either extreme, muſt unavoidably prove her ruin; and even the inclining too much to the one or to the other, be ſeriouſly hurtful to her welfare. Theſe are my ſentiments on this ſubject.

A. Yours, Cato, yours is the victory; or rather, you have gained the victory on behalf of virtue and wiſdom in my mind, over their antagoniſts vice and folly. I no longer look upon your theory as beautiful in itſelf only, but I conſider it as a true account of the order and ſymmetry of things. It ſhews the virtue of patriotiſm to have its foundation in one of our

principal duties; namely, that to mankind: in which an infinite number of leſſer duties are no doubt comprehended; itſelf contained within a greater; and all ſo depending one upon another, and ſo diſpoſed one within another, as to form together but one great whole—our duty to our Creator; and that our only true intereſt. How ſimple, how delightful, how ſatisfactory to the mind!

I have no more queſtions remaining to aſk. However unable to practiſe what I think right, I ſhall henceforwards be a patriot, at leaſt in theory; and I thank you, with all my heart, for the trouble you have ſo liberally beſtowed on ſo unprofitable a convert.

C. Fear not, Antonius. Weak and frail we undoubtedly all are, and cannot act entirely conſiſtent with the principles we approve. Yet in a world of imperfection, trial, and purification, every one act well done, is profitable both to the doer and to mankind: and I doubt not in the leaſt, with good principles, which ſhew in general what is right, you will do many things well; or, which is the ſame thing, conquer many temptations to do ill. Therefore cannot I agree in calling you an un-

profitable convert; nor indeed, for the ſame reaſons, any man who is reſolved to endeavour to diſcover and perform his duty. And now you muſt allow me, in my turn, to thank you alſo: in the firſt place, for the candour and moderation of your whole conduct in this debate; but principally for the obſervations you have made, and the queſtions you have aſked me, in the courſe of it. In the converſation they have occaſioned, I have received full as much ſatisfaction as you can have done. If you are converted to, I am confirmed in, true and right principles. I am convinced that it is our duty, as far as we have the ability and means of doing it, to penetrate to the foundation of things: to diſcover, in ſpite of prejudice, upon what principles government is eſtabliſhed; when it ought to be ſupported, and when it ought to be reſiſted. I am convinced that it is both as natural and as abſurd an error in man, to be miſtaken in the object of his political, as of his religious veneration. Men give the name of Gods to images, and worſhip them: men give the name of Princes to their fellow-creatures, and worſhip them likewiſe; without conſidering that wiſdom, goodneſs, and power, manifeſted towards mankind,

kind, are the only attributes to which love, reverence, and obedience are due. To theſe they are certainly moſt ſtrictly due; and therefore in the firſt inſtance, and higheſt degree, to the Deity, from whom theſe attributes are inſeparable.

To human governors, love, reverence, and obedience, are requiſite only as they conduct themſelves. We are bound to allow for failings in them, and great ones too, as in ourſelves; for, after all, they are our fellow-creatures: but we muſt receive advantage and protection from their government, or elſe we cannot owe allegiance to it. I am convinced further (to put an end at laſt to this long diſcuſſion) that it is our duty to oppoſe all defenders of any power whatever, be it of the prince, the great men of the nation, or the populace, which is hurtful to the community at large of which we are a part: that liberty, as far as the ſtate of our country in regard to morals, and her ſituation in other reſpects, will permit, is of all things the moſt eſſential to her welfare; and that it is our poſitive and bounden duty to make the advancement and ſupport of that welfare the great rule of our public conduct, and one principal aim of

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our lives; in order to promote which (as has been ſhewn) it is requiſite firmly and ſteadily to ſupport, obey, and reſpect the eſtabliſhed government, as long as it continues tolerably good.

FINIS.